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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 002082

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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [UK](#) [AS](#)

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN DEMARCHE: MILITARY PARTICIPATION
CONDITIONS AND PRT REFUSAL

REF: BAGHDAD 2046

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES DANIEL SPECKHARD FOR REASONS 1.4 (A),
(B) AND (D)

¶1. (C/ REL AS, UK) SUMMARY: On June 17, Australian Ambassador Howard Brown confirmed to Charge d'Affaires Speckhard that Australian military forces will participate in overwatch operations in Dhi Qar and Muthanna Provinces following the transfer of security responsibility to the Iraqis in Muthanna Province -- but on the condition that Iraq clearly and unambiguously consents to each specific operation. Charge stated that this condition would not be acceptable to either the USG or to MNF-I. Brown further announced that Australia had decided not to participate in a PRT. Charge said that this was a serious disappointment and urged Brown to seek reconsideration of that decision. Mission believes that we should not accede to the prior consent condition, and we should try to bring Canberra back into some form of working with a PRT. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C/REL AS, UK) Australian Ambassador Brown delivered a demarche to Charge and POLMIL Counselor on June 17 as a follow-on to the June 15 Quadrilateral and subsequent bilateral AU-UK meetings in London. Brown said that similar demarches were being made in capitals and by the Australian military team at Camp Victory to MNF-I. Australia would participate in Coalition military overwatch missions, Brown stated, subject to a satisfactory Implementing Arrangement between the Coalition and the GOI. Specifically, Brown explained, Australia would support broader security operations as required in Dhi Qar and Muthanna provinces; the Australian forces would relocate to Talil Air Base once their security mission in support of Japanese troops in Muthanna was complete. The Australian proposal included a requirement for "clear and unambiguous Iraqi consent for each specific operation." (See para 6 for full text of Aide Memoire.)

¶3. (C/ REL AS, UK) Brown also informed Charge that Australia will not take part in a PRT in Iraq because of concern for local Iraqi resentment of Coalition presence and because involvement in a PRT with limited assets would detract from Australia's operational overwatch mission.

¶4. (C/ REL AS, UK) Charge informed Brown that Embassy would convey these points to Washington. Charge cautioned Brown, however, that MNF-I and the USG likely would not accept any requirement to obtain Iraqi consent for Coalition military operations in advance, which would be inconsistent with current obligations to protect Iraq's security under UNSCR 1546 and 1637. Such a restriction, Charge explained, also would contravene our requirements for freedom of movement,

which the GOI has accepted. Finally, Charge noted, the transfer of security responsibility in Muthanna Province does not remove MNF-I's continuing responsibility for overall command and control of all Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces (Iraqi Army and National Police). Charge added that he was very disappointed with Canberra's decision on PRT participation and pressed to see if locating the PRT on Tallil Air Force Base might change the Australian government's decision. Brown responded that it would not.

5 (C/ REL AS, UK) COMMENT: The transition of security for Muthanna Province was announced by the PM on June 19. We believe that keeping the Australians on board including in some way in the PRT is important, but we must not accede to this request for prior Iraqi consent. Persuading the Australians to do so is best dealt with in capitals. We also do not know what the GOA meant in the fourth paragraph of the Aide Memoire (nor did Ambassador Brown), except for a possible reference to rules of engagement and other national constraints. This could be fleshed out in capitals as well. We request that Washington and Canberra keep us apprised of developments. END COMMENT.

AIDE MEMOIRE

¶6. (C/ REL AS, UK) BEGIN TEXT (sic): The Australian Delegation the 15 June Quadrilateral Meeting in London held a number of bilateral Meetings. The following day with the UK Ministry of Defence and the FCO at which they:

Sought to have the National-Level Implementing Agreement between the GOI and MNF-I include a specific exchange of written instruments in the event Coalition Forces are requested to assist the ISF in crisis re-intervention operations under operational overwatch.

Stressed the need to ensure there was clear and unambiguous Iraqi consent for each specific operation.

Recommended that the provincial-level agreement between the Iraqi Governor of Al Muthanna province and MND-SE include a reference to respective Coalition Partners' national command elements and processes.

UK interlocutors undertook to attempt to have appropriate language to this effect inserted in the respective agreements. END TEXT.

SPECKHARD